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The arts you see in this reader are by Farangis G. Yegane and Gita Yegane Arani. The “I” perspective in these essays is Gita Yegane Arani. The texts developed in cooperation between Farangis and Gita.

Every individual animal has a narrative (in context with her experience of her habitat and environment).

Denying nonhuman animals their own languages, as autonomous communicative systems that linguistically have evolved independent of human linguistics, means denying animals moral agency, let alone the experience of an individual narrative. Biologism and epistemological humancentrism reduce nonhuman animals to mere 'explicable organisms'.

Tierautonomie / Gruppe Messel



Thoughts about the languages of animals

I can't see how a term such as 'animal language' could pose a problem to anybody when it directly refers to an animal's way of communication. I am however critical of people who 'translate' animals in stereotype ways.

Nevertheless I could apologize for using a word that describes the phenomenon that humans see as exactly the very one criterion which most sharply shows the difference between humans and all other animals. The word 'language' has evolved in the human mind and possesses as such its linguistic legitimacy.

The word 'language' belongs to one of the core conceptions of the most drastic forms of negative speciesism. Regarding this presumed ground I have to stand upon, I apologize for the insufficiency of my attempt to communicate something for which I can insofar only borrow this word, and I dare to ask you to perhaps think of a second word 'language' – free of value in a sense – which would only describe what we may not be able to describe yet within the borders of our set of regulations as we have them currently in regards to language; I am well aware that people usually don't want to accept that this one human term 'language' can be used tightly paralleled to animal language, and that so far the word 'animal language' has only be tolerated on a scientific level to refer to human parameters that have been applied to animal communication.

Animals speak their languages, but what their languages consist of, could only be understood if we communicated with them on a level that allows them to use their language.

Animal languages work like human languages, where you can translate what you understand and try to put how-you-can-understand-the-message or that what you understand into your terms of your language. The same happens when I talk to any other individual: I comprehend what she/he/it conveys in the restrictedness or unrestrictedness of my own terms. My terms don't merely underly semantics – though they might be translated back and forth into semantics, morphemes and syntax. My own terms and concepts have, in spite of their belonging to my system

of language, a restricted meaning. In a very basic sense I have to rely on that what I understand or confer to that what I perceive.

The languages of animals (there are more animal languages than human languages of course) are seen by us as having a super restricted meaning. If we take the position of the nonhuman side in general, we can say though that human languages are restricted in that they only apply to humans. And seen from a standpoint which takes into account the question of perspective, I can say that if I don't understand a dog, it's because she belongs to a different animal 'group' when compared to my human group.

'Communication' infers meaning to the act of communicating on any level of any sound/wave produced by a communicative agent.

Does language necessarily have to be connected to the history, the past, the present and the future of human progress? Why should animals have ever evolutionary or in any wise chosen to contextualize their existence positively with the human existence? A being of an animal group or I'd like to say an animal culture, clearly differentiates that what is important to their own existence; and I would call this rather their philosophy instead of just an evolutionary occurrence. I find it permissible to use a word of the human language to describe something I witness, on an experiential basis, about the side of someone (animals) who uses another language. Also, I prefer to call the expressed existence of nonhuman animals a philosophy, since it is too simple and anthropocentrically self-serving to underlie animal existence pure evolutionary ends. I do draw from my personal observations which seem sufficient for me to make my own judgements in this case and to make a decision about what to think here.

Basically I think that everybody knows that animals have their languages, but that we usually deny that these languages, that we don't understand, have any meaning beyond marking an inferred biological determinism at all.

But how would we not deny any meaning of animal communication that would go beyond the notions that our societies generally have about even the being itself of animals; we deny the fact of a self-authorative being of animals in itself in its whole meaning. So, no surprise that we draw major qualitative lines. In terms of

language, we create a complicated building of restrictions to exclude the nonhuman animals from the comparatively tolerant perspectives that we have in regards to the pluralism of human languages. (It's ok for a human language to be completely different, just because it's human.)

We deny another animal that it's not instinctual, because he/she/it not a human. You can indeed call everything an instinct. Still you can't really prove that it is "instinct". You can just put the 'supposed carrier of an instinct' in a setting where they are treated as such instinctual beings (a paradox in itself) and seen as such, and interpreted as such.

Possibilities

Human rights in favor of animal rights may hopefully be another way to convey that an opinion of a human majority can't represent a truth about any individual animal and the whole animal groups: The animal individual itself is a truth-bearer since it exists, and simply by that it represents, through how it lives (in its own rights and in its own terms) a truth. Just like I judge humans I meet by the impact of truth (their actions are possible just by sheer existence), I would want to be as just as I can towards the ways in which individual nonhuman animals live.

- Art doesn't function through semantics, since there are shapes and colors
- Micky Mouse doesn't function through semantics, since there are figures and action!
- Snowball doesn't function through semantics, since there is Lisa taking her seriously enough!
- Music doesn't function through semantics, since there is play and composition!
- Oppression doesn't function through semantics, since there are suppressors
- Love doesn't function through semantics, since there is understanding and misunderstanding
- Peace doesn't function through semantics, since there are underlying actions ... and this array could go on and on. Anyway, and still this is all part of our language?

What we do when we speak about ‘animals’ and ‘language’ is: We reduce the complexity of animal communication to linguistical terms into which they may not fit. Instead of admitting the existence and relevance of other communicative systems as being really independent from our systems and which are thus not explainable through purely and solely biological criteria (instinct).

I have compounded two things:

1. the function of the term ‘instinct’ as
 - a. serving to restrict the notion of a *socio-ethical plane* as if that had only developed in and being attributable to humans and ‘human groups/cultures’ and
 - b. its intended reduction of the scope and meaning of communication in nonhuman animals to a biologically explainable and manipulatively determinable code,

and

2. I have defined linguistics as an inadequate means of setting general rules for a communicative validity.

Instincts and linguistics are terms/phenomenons that are working in our systems of categorization.

In regards to the self-categorization going along with this, I also want to point out that our own language does not base

- a. on merely a functional basis neither in connection to the agent that uses language nor in connection with the subjects that language seeks to deal with,
and
- b. that our language might also not just be a compound of what linguistics (and maybe physiological aspects of speaking) alone can make out of it.

Generally: Cultural (in a non-humancentric sense, i.e. implying “the natural” on an equal scale) and individual aspects play a role too, as well with humans as with animals when communicating!

I do state again that the word culture can to my opinion also be applied to nonhuman animals – if one allows a culture to be really and profoundly different [from “our” cultures] too.

A kind reply I got to this essay

Animal Language Essay

I have been saving your essay on Animal Language for some time. I signed up for two courses this semester: Intro to Philosophy and Anthropological Linguistics. The Philosophy instructor’s wife (another professor) claims that the “only difference between human animals and nonhuman animals is “language!” Since, I know this to be inherently illogical I heartily protested. He appeared to be intimidated by my remark and became withdrawn, so communication ended.

In addition, my Anthropological linguistic textbook makes this claim as well, although worded differently. For example,...”As far as we know only ‘humans’ have language.” I am on the verge of pulling hairs out of my head but resist this impulse, since there is enough violence to go around. Instead, after locating your article, I am going to ask them to read your essay. Frankly, I agree with most of what you stated with the exception of what could appear to be speciesist in term usage, such as “it” in reference to nonhuman animals, which, if I am correct, supports the ongoing oppression of nonhuman animals. Perhaps, I am mistaken and misread your term, since, some of your comments were more complicated than I could readily understand, so I will reread your wonderful [text] again. More important, I am so so grateful for people like yourself.

As an Anthropology major with an interest in speciesism. every day ever more speciesist attitudes are revealed to me, sometimes, my own included and, if it were not for people like Gary Francione, Carol Adams, Joan Dunayer, Colleen Patrick Geoudreau and other amazing truth seekers, I do not think I would be able to

pursue my goal which is to write on human animals and their very wrong relationship with nonhumans [...]



We speak with each other, somehow. Fragment about an ongoing social process.

First I ought to say I hope that nobody who might be picking up on this will be trying to take the issue in a simplistic way. It is in no regards. I would like to start Human + Nonhuman mutual translation project. But this is going to be difficult, because I don't want to impose neither any potentially restrictive definitions on my nonhuman fellows that I am communicating with, nor do I want to cater to the chorus of voices who seek to belittle nonhumans on the basis of their cultures and languages being different and for us not translatable. But right here I must pause, because: why can't we translate Nonhuman Animals? As I previously suggested, as anti-speciesist I don't see a difference when it comes to trying to understand "my opposite" – I think we can try to understand each other possibly, if we come

to see our own language (and parameters) as relative. I come from a non- or anti-biologicistic and anti-humancentric approach, and I only want to turn my views into public input, because it is horrifically ridiculous and more than that tragic, how narrowly we view the idea of language to a contemporary and only highly restricted definition of the term.

Animals ...

We speak. We all have different approaches of how we try to understand each other, but to draw a line based on biology is problematic, as long as we fail to question that parameter of explanation critically. I suggest to get away from any speciesist paradigm and use plain and naked reason to find solutions to accepting communication as a fact in itself (without further reproach to explicability within a humancentric dominant context) and I believe a broadened classification of ‘language’ in terms of our own human language even is needed, and which can’t as well be narrowed down to a set of neurological and technical terms. Life’s intricacy needs to be taken account of in human as well as in nonhuman and other than human animal terms.



Animal Knowledge

It's astonishing, why are we willing to accept that the burden of proof lies with the nonhuman animals and their allies, to make clear who they are, when a human-centred society doesn't even have the will and ability to see the full spectrum. Why do we, their allies, bow in to human methods of research on things that can't be proven and that don't have to be proven?

Their individual life's dignity does not need to be proven; it needs to be acknowledged, without restrictive conditions.

What the AR community should learn is to claim the rights, the foundation of dignity, the freedom that really lies outside of paradigms that were (and are) installed to quite contrarily draw lines as aggressive borders.

We tie our human standards and insights on a.) language and b.) on our specific capacity to utilize nature, and we see both these things as qualifiers that are intertwined: Language plus the capacity to utilize nature as a resource!

It never occurs to us that other beings could have a more sustainable and clearly wise concept of how to live on planet earth, that their ancestral relation over millions of years has given them insight on how to interact in other ways with nature and their natural environment.

We would deny that, because we don't accept that nonhumans have concepts. We think concepts can only occur with certain qualifiers ... , and we think that nature couldn't have possibly taught nonhuman animal ancestors things they decidedly built their cultures on.

We think nonhuman animals don't decide these things.

I could go on, but my point is that we as AR people err so bad, because we don't want to take the stance that would make us jump in the cold water of radical new perspectives in terms of: de-humanfocusing and thus deconstructing sources we refer to as a basis of knowledge about life.

We keep putting new wine into old bottles when we don't come up with a new architecture of basic knowledge.

Animal Theology: Man-Machine? Animal Reason!

The basic question about the categorical division into (nonhuman) "animals" and "humans" (*Homo sapiens*), brings up probably before the question of its moral implications, the question about what exactly hides beneath both these big generalized identities.

- Why has the view about that what-animals-are and that what-humans-are finally lead to us only viewing animals under biological terms today?

- Is it enough to attribute only an instinctual behaviour to nonhuman animals?
- Is it thus the ‘fault’ of animals that humans won’t relate to them in any further way than how they are relating to them today?

What other options are there?

Animal = instinctual? Human = reasoning? Attributed identities in a human-centered narrative

If we don’t accept the view that nonhuman animals are those who have to stand below humans, within a frame given by e.g. a biological, philosophical or even a divine hierarchy-of-being, then such a claim doesn’t have to be solely morally motivated. It can also mean that we question the way in which both identities („animal“ and „human“) are understood, that we question the separation and qualifications of these identities, even before the questions of our wrongdoings enter the floor of debate.

We can ask if the interpretation of the characteristics that are considered to make up the marking dividers within a “human-animal hierarchy”, are in reality a negation of the autonomous value of otherness or diverseness of nonhuman animals.

We know that the single criterion that serves as our standard, is the human parameter, i.e. the human model counts as the ideal, as the standard, for creating norms.

- So what happens if we put this standard of measurement into doubt?
- It’s a question of perspective!

Conclusions deduced in the fields of biology and psychology/specifically ethology, with those being the main academic sectors that deal with the explicability of *animal identity*, nail the perspectives:

- On the supposed relevant characteristics

- on how animal characteristics (in either, the case of humans or nonhuman animals) have to a.) express themselves and b.) in which exact correlation they have to become „measurable“, in order to reach a certain relevance or meaningfulness from a human point of perspective.

So the problem lies in the question why humans won't accept nonhuman animal autonomy when it can't be made fathomable through the perception of a value-defined comparison.

Why are own nonhuman animal criterions and why is their independent meaningfulness (for the sake of themselves and for their situation within their natural and social inter- and co-specific contexts) rendered irrelevant, when they cross our perspectival glance, and when these animal criteria could also be understood and accepted to fully lay outside of our hierarchical-framework?

Animal individuality

To be willing to accept an autonomous meaningfulness of nonhuman animals, means to question the deindividualization that our views and explanations about nonhuman animals purport. Those are the views that allow us to set nonhuman animals in comparison to us, as 'the human group' of identity, instead of seeing otherness and/or diverseness in itself as a full value. And those are also the views that seek to sort out how the existential 'meaning' of nonhuman animals might relate to anything that matters to us "humans" as a closed group of identity.

The deindividualized view of nonhuman animals almost automatically goes along with the subtraction of value in terms of attributed meaningfulness, and so we land at the moral question now – since the question of identities, individual existence and deindividualization indeed pose ethical conflicts.

Nonhuman animals, and the attributed identities in the fields of "animal" and "human" social contexts

If we can view nonhuman animals, apart from their localization in the realm of biology, for example also in a sociological context, then we could ask the question: „How do people act towards nonhumans animals?“

- Can we explain the behaviour of humans towards nonhuman animals solely by referring to the common notion that one can't really behave in any particular way towards nonhuman animals because they are supposedly 'instinctively set' and 'communicatively restricted' compared to us, and that thus our behaviour towards them can't contain an own quality of a social dynamic?
- Can we legitimate our typically human social misbehavior towards nonhuman animals by referring to the „stupidity“ that we interpret into nonhuman animal behaviour?

Such questions would of course only feed themselves on stereotypes of animal identity, no matter from where they'd stem!

However we probably can't ask any of such questions a sociologist, though it could fall into their scope to analyze these relationships. Sociologists likely would prefer to deal with the animal rights movement and not deal with the interaction between humans and nonhuman animals, since everyone seems to be in accordance with the fact that a natural science, biology, has already determined what the identity of nonhuman animals "factually" is. And it must be said that even the animal rights movement seems to place the moral question somewhere almost out of reach by accepting the explanation of the identity of animals as something more or less strictly biological.

A geometrical image

Imagine two abstract groups. Group A consists of triangles and everything that surrounds them becomes mathematically relevant to their own triangular form. This happens as all that either resembles or does not resemble a triangle appears in a certain colour.

Group B are circles.

Now group A says that group B aren't triangles (because A are triangles) and that B also weren't squares or rectangles.

Does any reason follow from this which would mathematically legitimate for the circles to be excluded as equally valid geometrical figures?

The triangles are different compared to the circles, but both are geometrical figures and insofar of an equal value.

They can be correlated due to each of their geometrical qualities, even when the circles do not match the characteristics of the triangles!

Let's take this as our metaphor

Sociology does not question the social interaction between humans and nonhuman animals. They don't scrutinize that relation from their viewpoint, because the view held on the human relation towards animals is already set in its core by the natural sciences.

The hierarchical empire built by the natural sciences though [and along with it the humanistic kind of knowledge on which the modern natural sciences base upon] rules out every need for any further examination and consideration of this relationship. We do not see the direct relation between humans and nonhuman animals.

A most typical exemplification of that inability to relate on a basic and fundamental level of 'common sense' can be pinpointed in the difference between relating to nonhuman animals in terms of "joy" versus "love": as in "animals equally feel joy" or "we can both love", and "pain" versus "violence": as in: "animals can equally feel pain" or "we can both experience violence". Love is an intermittent sentiment, violence also bases on social interactivity (though in that negative sense), whereas "joy" is located only in the subject we attribute the feeling to, and the same goes for "pain".

We – nonhuman animals and humans – understand the questions of LOVE and VIOLENCE. Whereby “joy” and “pain” are reductionary names for the “same” thing.

Regarding the question whether animals can be perceived in any way as moral agents, one has to ask, does moral exist outside the human concept of morality? When we discuss morality we presume that the substance matter which the term comprises came into life through our perceptions, and because we define what „moral“ means, we can claim a described phenomenon as solely ours.

What does morality consist of?

- Does morality solely exist because of a theoretical framework? One can doubt that. Morality on the one side has something to do with basic social interaction, through that morality gains value.
- On the other side are the superordinate agreements about morality, which are declared and decided upon by an elite or defining group/process, but through that the agreements about morality only contain a forced validity, which is disconnected from its own basis, that is: the meaning of social interaction between beings (i.e. the construct about morality excludes that what lays outside of its hierarchy, other forms of interaction that contain „social values“).

On the individual plane exists that what any “I” perceives and experiences in her lived interactions and experiences as „morally okay“. And that can be between nonhuman animals or humans in the whole environmental context – seen from a commonsense point of view if we take the human view.

When we discard the human decorum that surrounds and sticks to the word morality, we can say that every action has a moral implication, non-anthropocentrically seen.

It’s always the same: otherness and diverseness. We have to accept it.

Animals have a very different philosophy-of-living in a neutral comparison to our philosophy of life, and I believe one can use the term philosophy here to describe

the yet unnamed phenomenon in nonhumans animals of how they structure and perceive their own lives.

I ask myself whether the human problem with nonhuman animals isn't rather to be found in the differences of their philosophies-of-life when compared to our typically human ones.

The problems lie much more in this radical otherness from us or rather the qualities of diverseness, than in the reasons of gradual biological differences or in the often assumed moral impotence on *this other one's* (the nonhuman animal's) behalf.

The problem thus seems to fluctuate around the scope of difference and coinciding and convergent similarity. In many aspects we equal nonhumans animals a lot, but in the aspect of our dominance claim finally, we see nonhuman animals as „the losers“, the bottom of the evolutionary or divinely ordained hierarchical order on which we can postulate our violent and hypocritical senses of power.

That nonhuman animals are the losers amongst the biological animals is even an attitude that some of their advocates purport. I often meet people who won't reckon a unique, self-sufficient quality seen to be in the closeness and distance amongst the different animals (including human animals). In the forefront of every argumentation there is always: how are they in comparison to us. As if humans and nonhuman animals had to compete on an „equal“ scale ... and another related argumentation goes: how much of their „instinct“ could possibly entitle them to be granted rights; rights that would protect them from humans (whereby it is highly questionable whether those who have prejudices against you, can really grant you or protect your own rights.)

Human society, it seems, will always consider the „us“ and the „we“ as objectively more important, insofar as the „we“, the how „we are“, is the criterion, and nonhumans animals are measured against it.

The crucial point is to accept others with their diverseness and to accept the validity of otherness and diversity; for the others and for us.

Five neovegan perspectives

1. Why Animal Rights can't be treated as secondary to Human Rights

Let's assume we can't overcome human conflicts, and let's assume we do not want to consider animal rights (as an equivalent to human rights) and environmental issues as ways in which we could find fundamentally better approaches to conflict solution, just because there doesn't really exist an openness in the viewpoints of the majority to allow new or different perspectives on what is to be considered as relevant and 'sense-possessing' as human rights solely perspectives are.

Animal rights, even if not considered as touching a sphere of meaningful phenomena, is objectively not a secondary concern. I'd argue so, since the fact that human persons relegate animal individuals into "irrelevance", as a sector created for the nature-animal complex, doesn't hold any factual account for the leakage we can call an obvious one if we look at:

- a) the grade of destruction aggravated by any forms of speciesism (and humancentrism respectively) and
- b) the essential bond of the human notion of an ideal justice in the moral practice lived by societies (idealism) with the natural and the nonhuman animal world; and the unknown factors reciprocal of nature and nonhuman animals overall as they display themselves back to human society (the other intelligence – 'designed by life' basically).

2. Animal Rights and Human Rights, your rights, as interconnected

How can animal rights and human rights be interlocked politically in a constructive way, instead of using human rights against animal rights?

We often tend to think that animal- and human rights would exclude each other, and the stereotypical „AR vs. HR” question, about who you would save first if you had to: your dog or your child, is being asked as if one had to pass a witch-

test which is going to decide your fate as a proper human- or animal rights advocate. A more reasonable view would let us come to the conclusion that narrowing things down to the extremes isn't really a useful approach upon which a rights debate can be lead.

The focus in such a question that seeks to radically separate two instances (two situative phenomena occurring in a wider context) from each other, is almost suggestive if not ignorant in its view towards the facets of reality that make up the complexity of life as living beings experience it.

Put in a situation where we had to decide between rescuing one living being and another, it is likely that we would not want to decide for one and against the other. We should consider the perspectival option that we'd want to save every being that's in despair. We could think for instance: in any situation where a being needs help, a being needs a helper!

As animal rights advocates we clearly want both: a full consideration of (reasonable) human interests and rights and a full consideration of what we can understand to be the rights of other nonhuman animals as natural and so far animal-rights-political holders of such – by virtue of their self-autonomous existence in this world. And to take this a step further: we probably want to interlock animal- and human rights, so that both reaffirm and solidify each other. How can this be reached? And how can this, even more so, be reached in our current human societies, where the notion of animal rights is not regarded as positively relevant for the “own’ – collective human concern”.

One aspect that builds an (euphemistically said) “automatic” way to bind animal- and human rights together, is, as “simple” as it may sound the natural environment. Whereby ‘the (natural) environment’ can be a term for what the German poet-thinker Goethe more comprisingly called “das AllLeben”, the all-live – a term that hints at the interconnectedness of all life forms on earth and beyond.

The environment, nature, is the habitat of nonhuman animals and humans alike. It's the sphere of living existence where both humans and nonhuman animals meet in their natural state of being, and it's the very political ground (that is: a sphere

of life and thus of interests) that needs to be re-captured for the ethical side that is to it, in regards to animal liberation and animal rights.

There are three core aspects that bind humans and animals together in their environmentalistic and nature-bound context:

- a.) existentially we got the shared ‘outer world’ on which life depends in its individual and collective existential value
- b.) the conflict between the (major) life forms is produced by ‘the culture’ in which life finds its contextualization, ranging from predominantly destructive in current humancentric human societies and, environmentally seen, constructive in nonhuman animal cultures and their form of relating to the natural
- c.) the solution, the bridge, lays in the will for re-establishing a natural balance, that encompasses its participants, the living beings, as co-creant, co-existential “agents of an self-created contextualizing existence” that can be understood as something that we emotionally would induce with “dignity”.

Dignity is the felt and the realizable foundation of rights. Being co-existent in this world and acknowledging the agency of nonhuman animals in the environmental context, is a basis that should tie human- and animal rights constructively in a potentially fundamental way.

3. Neoveganism as a way forward in our current day Western and other emerging democracies

It seems the more you realize the political scope of human action and human thought, the less you think of the absurd idea that there would be one single power (the establishment, the fiscal world, a people, a god) that runs everything in a totalitarian style: the big complexes of “might” stifle the individuals power to impact things, *but individual action can’t be substituted in democracies.*

What can I, as a seemingly powerless individual, do when I see an unfathomable disaster such as the BP oil spill, a disaster caused by the ‘ruling’ part of our civilization? Our civilization bases (in its majority) upon humancentrist ideals

today, it doesn't need to take the natural environment and its "wild" inhabitants into "positive" account. To deal responsibly as an individual means I have to be willing to see the bigger contexts of phenomena, and widen my view over the limits of any anthropocentric limit.

On the opposite side of the big context of things, it's the individual that has an impact on the situation she lives in: by action (political action, in a basic sense) and by thought (any form of it). It's an ethical impact living beings 'live'.

When I make the sensible claim that ethics should be the factor upon which to decide what's wrong and what's right, I should also acknowledge that ethics means to behave respectfully towards life. What is respectful? And what type of life matters and can be treated with which forms of respect?

Every living being on this earth has its own place in the universe – practically. The world should not be seen anthropocentrically simply because we can't fathom the meaningfulness of other/diverse life in regards to those dimensions which we don't know much or even anything about. Other "dimensions" of meaning aren't restricted to physics and mathematical abstraction: ethics, and its substance (life!) *too* has dimensions beyond a narrow anthropocentric reach.

If I take the ethical vastness and comprehensiveness into account, I am able to see that every action I can do, and every wrong I don't do, wherever I am, has an impact on the life around me. Taking the interest of all life into a wide ethical (in a sense of setting oneself in a creative relation) consideration makes the action of the individual meaningful.

When I see that human progress is built mostly on a destructive relationship towards life – that we use and degrade to "resources" – I should be able to realize that the step I have to do, is to take up a plant-based ethical (radical antispeciesist and vegan) lifestyle and go further from that point on.

4. Neoveganism, pluralism and antispeciesism

It should be normal for animal rights advocates (with that I mean people primarily or partially interested or active in the global animal rights and liberation, etc.

movement) to accept different positions, without assuming that divergence would harm the cause. No need to say that exempt from such a form of mutual tolerance would be people who claim to be AR but practically advocate theories and practices harmful to nonhuman animals (euthanasia of “stray” feral animals, “humane” slaughter, hidden forms of speciesism, mild speciesism ...).

I often notice that there exists a self-prescribed narrowness in parts of the AR/AL movement which hinders the necessary plurality of expressed opinions for the cause. Naturally people hold different opinions about issues, especially when it comes to the details of something that could be described as a newly established consciousness as we have and develop it in the human-nonhuman animal relation today.

Why should animal rights be exempt from a highly diversified discussion such as we normally expect and have practically on every other big ethical, political and rights issue? Finding the truth (the acceptable truths of many insights) upon which to build a reasonable common grounds that reflects the needs of reality, finding a suitable and fruitful political and also legal language, and a language of liberation needs a full discourse made up of all our individual opinions. When we take our individuality away from our political agency (speech, thought and action) in our daily lives, we lose exactly that which enables us to make progress. Progress is plurality – the exchange of many powers and how they can synergize.

It's understandable when you take a look at the animal rights movement at its single place in history – possessing a newly understood form of an extended “beyond-social” interspecies context – that people are likely to assume that they would need to follow a school of thought or political opinion. In reality though animal rights is a phenomenon as fundamental as human rights, so basic and immediate to the individual existence that every person can become clear about her own understanding of basic rights terms in a valid way and that every person can figure out herself how she weighs out what's right and what's wrong in her own “common sense” rights-terms.

The relation towards nonhuman animals is ultimately an immediate one, it's a social connection in a new, antispeciesist way. And I think we should take it as such, if we truly are for human and animal liberation.

On a basis of accepting the presupposition that

- a. we can relate to nonhuman animals in a reasonable way obviously, and
- b. that the relation to nonhuman animals can thus be handled from the individual human in a similar way in which an individual human can assess human rights issues by applying her own common sense,

we can take our position of defense when we are addressing the “speciesist lobby”, which usually argues that there exist decisive barriers between the “values” of human and nonhuman animal life, a notion established on the premise that humans have the right to simply give the nonhuman animal world their definitions – in all detail (the result of which is mass murder on the biological argument).

We as animal rights/liberation/autonomy activists can constructively and positively relate to nonhuman animals, and we side with their interests from our position as fellow (human) animal beings. Practiced antispeciesism to its best level is an ongoing learning process which makes us mature and responsible as human beings or better as basic individuals. Our engagement and fight for the legal and earth-political rights to live, to possess habitat, to be a rights holder under nonhumancentric terms, will re-establish the integrity of an ongoing existential relationship we have with nonhuman animals. And this amounts to an entire paradigm-shift.

5. The face of an animal rights revolution ... it is about making these paradigm shifts

The uncountable deaths each day, every second, are the factual individual nonhuman animal victims who a human humancentrically driven full destructive force are directed against. We have to phrase clearly that speciesism is not just an accidental heritage of our human past which supposedly took place as “hunters and gatherers”, the question even remains open if in fact all human cultures have been hunters at some stage. Speciesism means, in the past inasmuch as in the

present, a war by means of denial of rights, namely the right to live and exist freely, that is being waged against nonhuman animals and their world.

The majority of the ‘human group’ determines how this world is to be explained and understood. We, as humans (in a collective sense), don’t accept that concepts or ideas which are not born out of a human logic (again, in a collective sense) and which are not shaped by our human perceptions and rationalizations can in fact exist. The revolution for animal rights, animal liberation or an acknowledgement of animal autonomy means to set forth that nonhuman animals have their very ways in which they shape this world. Their ways – their integrity in the natural sphere – need to be protected by rights that we as humans will have to enforce within the scope exclusively of human destructivity. That would at least take the burden of human oppression from the nonhuman animal ‘realm’.

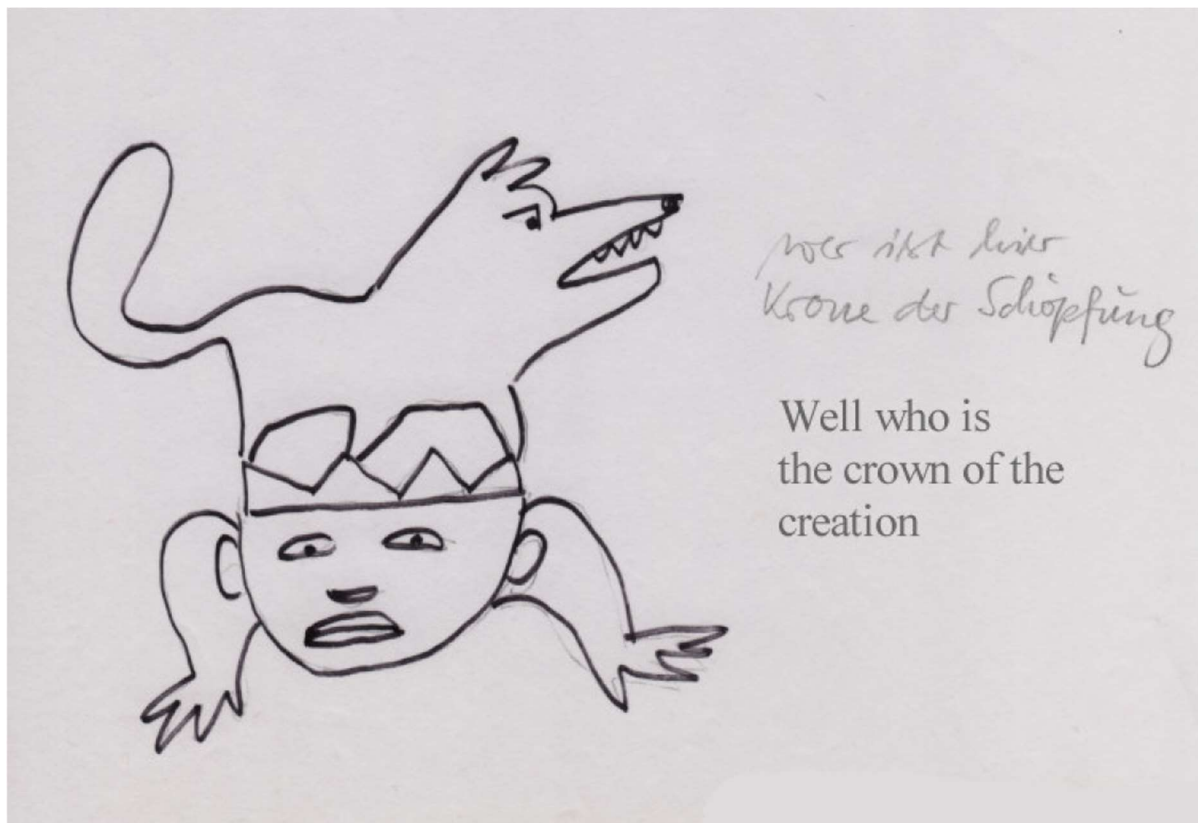
On the ethical side we can state that: in whichever context nonhuman animals are forced to live and to die in right now, their integrity can’t be stripped away from them – since in a fundamental and important sense nothing can negate their independent meaning.

What happens when our speciesist societies confine, torture and kill nonhuman animals is that humans collectively claim a total might over the physical life of nonhuman animals, in the final consequence.

Animal rights means to continuously work on the paths towards an anti-humancentrist human society in which the integrity of all animal life and the integrity of the entire natural world are being protected against so called “human interests”; which are in reality profane collective enmities towards “everything” and everyone who is not a human but a nonhuman animal and their natural living contexts.

And finally animal liberation should also mean the deconstruction of speciesist theories: Before the final consequence of physical harm and destruction we need to address the reasons and causes of the collective humancentric enmities and desires to subject animal-others and ‘nature’.





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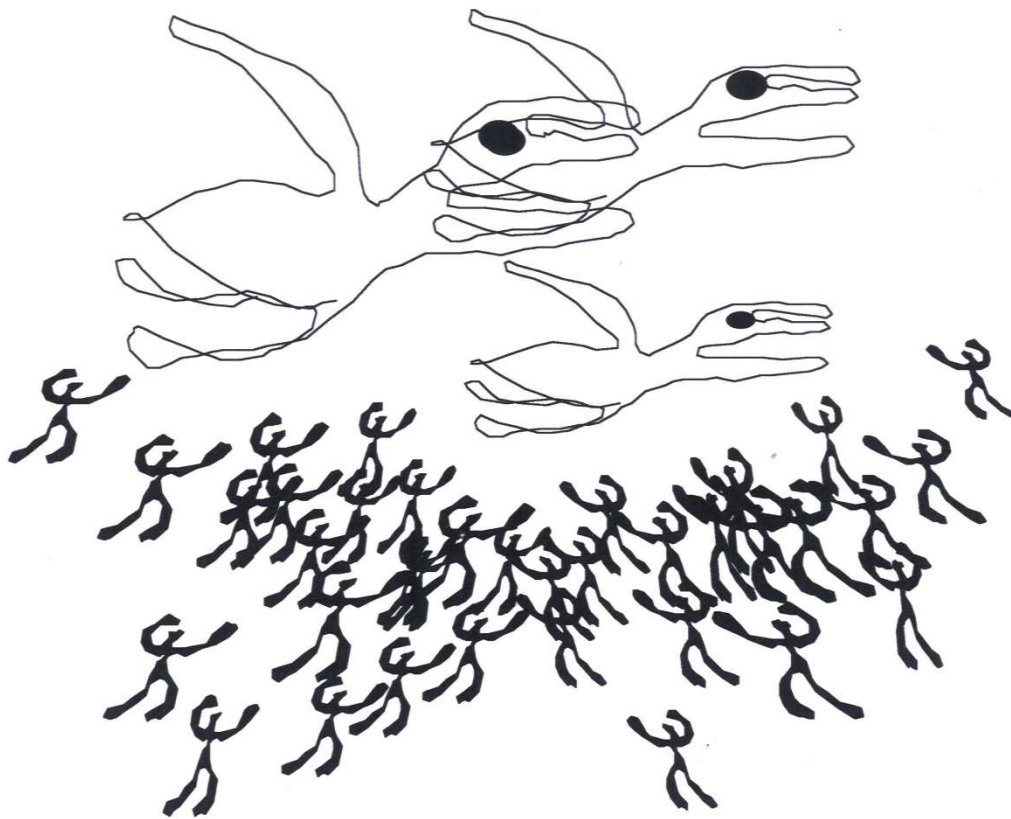
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Many forms of speciesism

Objectifying nonhuman animals takes various forms:

- in legal terms nonhumans are classified as property
- in religious terms the separation is being made spiritually, man is preferred and given the right to dominate all that is on earth
- philosophical schools may give an array of different reasons for why whichever form of speciesism might be ethically sound or a right view to maintain
- the natural sciences differentiate between beings driven by instinct, the lower forms of life, the higher forms and man with the supposedly most complex make up of mind and brain

- carnism could be said to be a term for one form of speciesism that classifies domesticated farm animals only (or finally, as in the case of horses and some exotic animals that are eaten such as ostriches) as “meat” or suppliers of food
- pets on the other side are, in spite of being loved by our society, also affected by speciesist views on them
- wild animals are forced to make up the object for hunters and hunting culture’s needs to re-exercise continuously the idea of a primeval and supposedly ideal condition of man as the hunter and gatherer
- but also wild animals are affected by argumentations that target them in terms of whether they are intrusive species or should be seen as protectable.

For every animal species we seem to get one or more forms of speciesist views, classifications, argumentations. In every aspect that defines the human view on his or her environment we seem to come across a derogative stance on nonhumans.

When we discuss speciesism we should bear in mind how complex and difficult to analyze the subjugative view on animal life is in our cultures and societies.



A Question Answered by a Question ... Can Animals Reason?

The question is not whether nonhuman animals have or can reason, but the question is: what is reason? To make the case clear by drawing an analogy: There has been a sexist denial of women “reasoning” in patriarchy, what we face in regards to nonhuman animals is now a biological barrier in the concept of “reasoning”.

Animals have been relegated into “the wilderness” (thus representing a condition of what in ancient Greece was named the *zoe*, a mere state of being, yet not of political agency) and humans made up a potential group of shared-interest-holders over nature as conquerable, exploitable, something human civilization was able to contrast its “virtues” against. An entire concept of politics could be built on a species contractualism (the state of the ancient greek *bios*, the human-only life of qualified- and thus political agency, in the sense of setting itself against “wild nature”).

Yet back to reasoning: In different times and cultures we had different concepts of what exactly “reasoning” would entail. And such concepts would mirror themselves in the notions humans had about their societal, philosophical or religious ideals. Most notably we have the contrasting differences of “reasoning” in the histories of the Far East, the Middle East and European and Western thinking.

Yet that shared divide between humans versus nonhuman animals must be an early momentum in “human history” overall.

Hannah Arendt frames a thought about such a total divide: “Solidarity: all terms of solidarity still purport the first and most basic solidarity between all humanity (i.e. of “the human”) against nature. Such a solidarity of one against everything else is yet never allowed amongst humans themselves. But there is no such thing as a necessity of solidarity. The idea of us all “sitting in one boat” is an example of this wrong notion of an absolute solidarity. The concept of a group, with its relatedness of the part-and-whole category, stems from the solidarity of the human against nature.” [1]

So my main question would be:

Could it be, that the concept of reasoning had thus been divided in an unnamed, ignored or negated form of reasoning that we have in the nonhuman- and nature-complex? And that on the other side we have the kind of reasoning of the conquering, dominant human?

[1] “Solidarität: Alle Solidaritätsbegriffe tragen noch deutliche Spuren der ersten und ursprünglichsten Solidarität aller Menschen (also des Menschen) gegen die Natur. Solche Solidarität von Einem gegen alles Andere ist aber unter Menschen nie erlaubt. Es gibt keine unbedingte Solidarität. Das “wir sitzen alle in einem Boot” ist ein Beispiel der falschen, verabsolutierenden Solidarität. Der Gruppenbegriff mitsamt seiner Bezogenheit auf die Teil-Ganzes-Kategorie stammt aus der Solidarität des Menschen gegen die Natur.” (S. 127), ARENDT, HANNAH, Denktagebuch 1959 – 1973, Erster Band, Hrsg: Ursula Ludz und Ingeborg Nordmann, Piper Verlag, München, 2002.

Is the utilization of ‘animal bodies’ the source speciesism? Where does animal degradation start?

How will human societies develop an understanding of animal degradation and speciesism? An example of animal degradation in context with normalized species-derogative views on horses specifically can be seen in this photograph for instance:



Unknown photographer, found on FB in someone's timeline. Showing this image only serves the purpose of documentation and sensitization in terms of leading an

antispeciesist discourse. (Using this image does not imply that we see such photographic arts / aesthetics as ethically tolerable or as supportive of serving nonhuman interests in any possible way.)

The degradation of nonhuman animals: does the consumption come first, the utilization, or the speciesist ideologies and beliefs?

The degradation of nonhuman animals and how that goes together with the consumption of nonhumans is something I really wonder about. Movies like “the end of meat” assume primarily an anti-carnism position, seeing the main problem in the biggest scale of the speciesist industries, namely the meat, milk, egg industry. But what we really have, what is taking place, is stretching out over virtually every aspect of human domination of ‘nature’. This is also why I personally put the killing and degradation of nonhuman animals in a context of zoocide taking place, alongside the dimensions of genocides and ecocide in human history.

I wonder if human societies will automatically stop degrading nonhuman animal cultures and their natural ecosystems when they stop torturing and murdering them on this unimaginably large scale in the meat and food industries. I wonder if the acceptance for otherness and for the diverseness of nonhuman animal cultures and individuals will grow in societies in the moment a society would stop killing them, eating them, and utilizing them primarily for reasons of their own human (killing-dependent) “survival” – and, if humanity would do so only partly for reaching a fully functioning future for *nonhuman animal- and animal-ecosystems rights and liberty*?

In other words will we stop seeing the world flat in regards to nonhuman animals and their natural habitats because we stop committing the largest part of zoocide and ecocide? I hope that will be so, but I have doubts. Looking back at the history of speciesism shows that the causes for the human hubris over nonhumans and nature are deeply installed in the history of human civilizations.

I believe that working against all forms of speciesism, and against forms of animal degradation in fact has to take place, on all levels where nonhumans are othered in destructive, degrading and harmful ways. Only so we will ensure that societies

develop an enlightened and reconciling view on nonhuman animality, and only so the spaces will be protected and the rights granted where animal individuals and groups live as the autonomous animal cultures they do form.

Also the language in regards of ‘nature’ often seems insufficient to me in anti-carnist and some antispeciesist approaches so far. The meaning of ‘nature’ so far is not being contextualized enough with the question of nonhuman animal habitats as an *animal-ecopolitical ground*. In general ‘nature’ is being mostly discussed in terms of sustainability as a “resource” for human ecopolitics. Animal friends needs the contextualization of animal liberation/animal right with ecopolitics on a very high level though.

This comment is however not meant to be a negative critique, it is only an attempt to point out problems that seem untouched by the mainstream approaches in veganism. Mainstream vegan thinking focusses on the end of animal oppression as supposedly being stoppable and foremostly addressed by the end of mass animal farming industries, instead of seeking to dismantle the working variables of systematic and individual animal oppression as they occur on any and every given level in human societies.

The difference between mainstream veganism and our individual group’s approach has much to do with whether or not to acknowledge animal cultures and individuals in a non-biologicistic frame, and whether or not humancentric ideals are questioned in terms of affirmatively assigning nonhumans own ways/contexts of moral agency, own fully fledged ways/contexts of ethical values, of own fully fledged complex language-systems – and that thus also a lingua franca between humanity and animality is not just something fictional but rather something possible and something valid.

We need new and different sets of terms than the ones we have in our societies so far when we discuss nonhuman interests. A difference is clearly if someone is willing to take the discussion into wider fields than what we have so far even and in particular in human animal and critical animal studies – given that these are the very studies that deal with animality in the supposedly most progressive ways.

To our point of view the entire mainstream approach and consensus that we have – practically in ethical veganism and in direct or indirect animal liberation activities and theoretically in academic animal liberation approaches – all don't manage to coherently jump the crucial lines ... and thus they lack credibility in our point of view.

We still have too much unnamed speciesism in the anti-speciesist movement, and we still have too much omission of aspects of *nonhuman autonomy in the animal-nature-continuums and nonhuman culture/s* in an oppressive world. We finally don't even speak about a zoocide taking place on all levels in which oppression, violence, destruction, annihilation and negation can politically take place.



In memoriam of the 19th/early 20th century anti-vivisection activist Martin Eduard Staudinger

The grave site of Martin Eduard Staudinger, German Animal Rights advocate and anti-vivisectionist. His grave is on the Hauptfriedhof in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He shares a grave site with his grandmother Dorothea Staudinger geb.

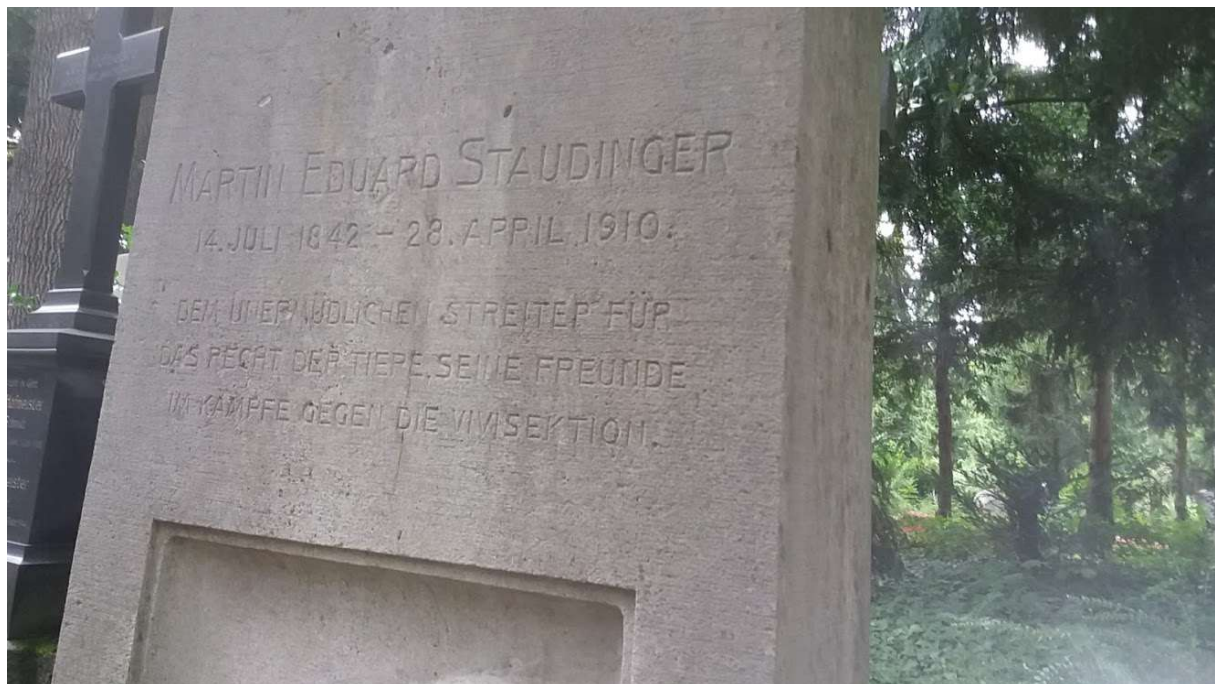
Behrends. On a memorial site for the people who lie resting on the Frankfurt Hauptfriedhof his grave is mentioned as: “146 Grabmal für Martin Eduard Staudinger (1842-1910), Kämpfer gegen die Vivisektion, Gewann C 59” (<http://www.bomas.de/buecher/brauchitsch-frankfurt.htm>, accessed on the 24.08.13)

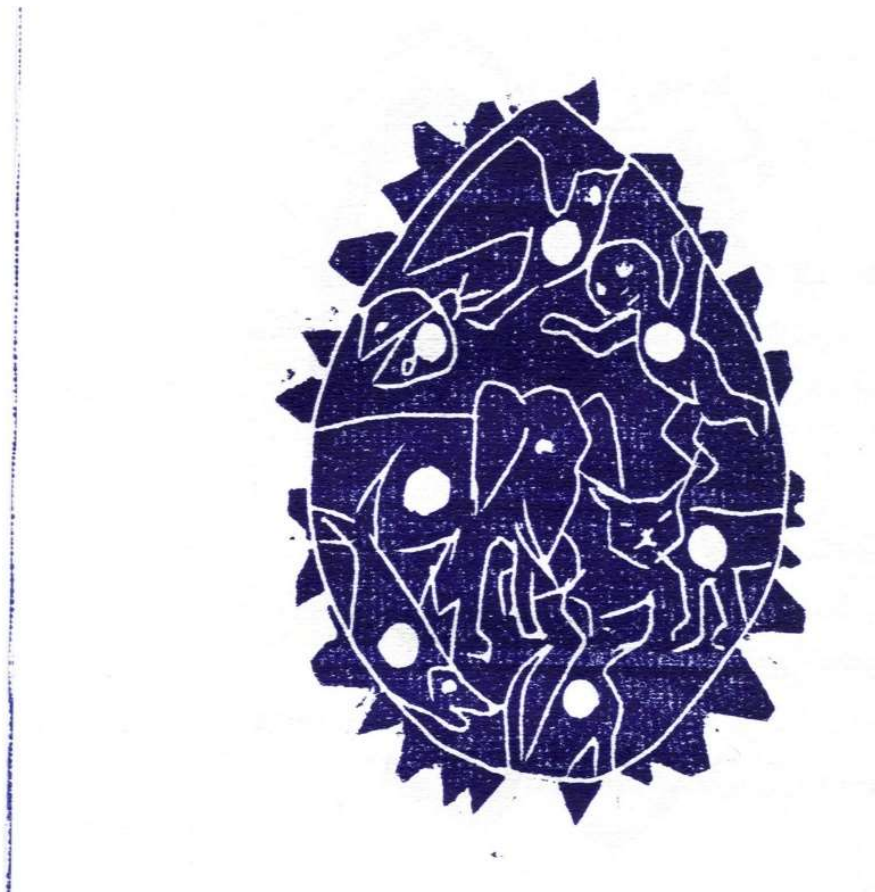
The inscription on his tombstone reads:

„Dem unermüdlichen Streiter für das Recht der Tiere, seine Freunde im Kampfe gegen die Vivisektion“

“The untiresome fighter for the right of animals, his friends in the struggle against vivisection.”

Below are photos of his gravesite. We found out that he translated some materials for the British National Anti-Vivisection Society in 1905.





LIGHTNING SPARKLES in
human souls
Lightning sparkles in beetle souls
bird souls fox souls
dog souls cat souls
tiger souls elephant souls
Lightning sparkles in all living beings
huge lightning sparkles firework

what god prescribes
radio silence to you?

Poetry and Graphic by Farangis G. Yegane.



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The arts you see in this reader are by Farangis G. Yegane and Gita Yegane Arani.
The texts developed in cooperation between Farangis and Gita.

Animal Agency and Morality

IS “MORAL AGENCY” NOT A VALID CRITERION FOR CLASSIFYING DIFFERENT FACETS OF ANIMALITY?

The idea of “moral agency” assumes similar anthropocentric allocations in terms of biological and cultural markers, such as the conservative species-hierarchical hypotheses about have all done in their approach to nonhumanity.

The construction of “morality” as an act should however ideally draw on non-anthropocentric perspectivic angles, to enable itself to touch upon the grounds of the large spectrum of co-existential modalities.

Questions:

- 1.) Which features, abilities and attributes are typically assumed as making up “animal agency” and, respectively, as typically making up “not-animal-agency” and “human agency”?
- 2.) On which criteria do these classifications and assumptions base?
- 3.) What would a map of “animal agency” look like from a nonanthropocentric perspective?

What is Animality, and what it isn't

You are at risk of engaging in rhetorical branding if:

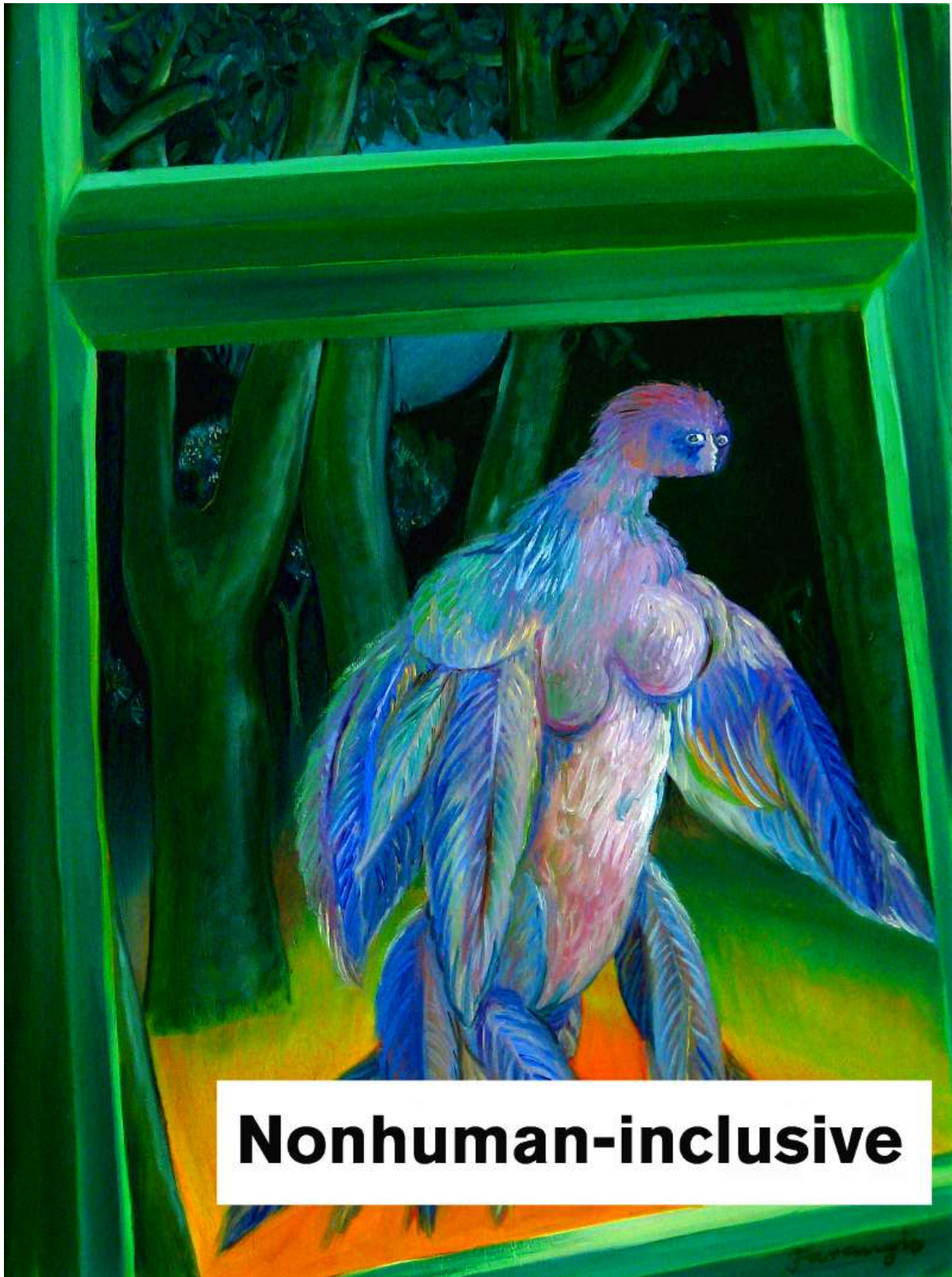
... ANIMALITY equals:

pigeonholing nonhuman animal “otherness” and/or diverseness, in (philosophical, religious, scientific, biologicistic, aesthetic, anthropologic) terms of excluding zoopolitical spaces of animal autonomy.

... and if HUMANITY amounts to:

“we”, the “Homo sapiens”.

A new discourse needs fresh approaches – not just a new labelling system for an ongoing current of stable moral fallacies.



Nonhuman-inclusive

When speciesism feeds speciesism, and why nonhuman-animal-allies should not fall for unproductive rhetorical twists

Two debates, the same problem with speciesist rhetorics blurring out a reasonable, coherent discourse.

A.) The (unfortunately) highly controversial debate about Halal and Kosher slaughter methods.

B.) The ‘humane meat’ marketing campaigns, using Animal Welfare as the as a vehicle for their sales boosting.

In both these speciesist segments – the one religious, the other one more plain-culturally based – you face an upholding of speciesist ideological tenets, additionally to the front-fight of defending a speciesist practice.

Why are we discussing these two examples of speciesist praxeses?

Pro-arguments defending these two praxeses, that are finding their basis in cultural reception, have permeated the Animal Rights debate to some extent in outreach strategies in regards to multiculturalism and culture – assuming “traditions” to be static and unchangeable societal phenomena/entities, immune to continuous ethical historical progress and change.

The Problem of rhetorical twists permeating the AR discussion in the case of A.): The basic argument from an AR side defending religious slaughter methods, as no less “cruel” than pre-stun methods, goes that Nonhumans suffer either way, conditions in slaughterhouses might even be worse, at least as bad, and that all slaughter must stop.

Usually missed in this string of argumentation is a more detailed critique why e.g. slaughterhouses such as those designed by Temple Grandin are for example “as bad” as religious slaughter methods: So called “humane” slaughter methods have to be criticized and critically examined in their own respect.

The argument against the relativization of ‘different speciesist practices’ as in the case A.) from an AR position can be:

Why are we fighting to be able to film abuse in factory farms, when in the end of the day the comparably more abusive form of “handling” does not make any difference at all? After all we are always trying to alleviate any comparably more “extreme” forms of injustices and utmost violence in a situation where we can’t stop speciesism overnight. We do that, alongside with campaigning for veganism (...)!

The trap with religious animal killing practices is that the degree to which killing becomes a deed of “good” is mostly being overlooked let alone critically discussed. Can you really expect strict believers to end killing Nonhumans, if it’s on behalf of an “almighty God” who decrees you to do so?

From an AR point of view we would say that no religion/religious tradition/belief whatsoever must come before either Animal Rights or Human Rights, equally and in a just and equal manner.

The Problem of rhetorical twists permeating the AR discussion in the case of B.): Anecdotal example: A German animal advocacy group advertised for “humane meat” with the slogan: “For a life before becoming meat” (http://www.provieh.de/downloads_provieh/01_ki_schweine.pdf, accessed 5.5.2014), the same slogan had been used by the Austrian Green Party (<http://www.gruene.at/europa/2-welle> , accessed 5.5.2014).

The problem from the AR side in dealing with similar rhetorics being that cultural tenets of speciesism are not questioned, nor what strategies are effective at such given contexts. Strategies and analyses seem to fall short in favor of a short-term mass-movement idea and behaviour within the AR community:

- There is no clear line drawn towards impacts of that what comes along as cultural heritage
- Activists fight against the symptoms, not the cultural roots of speciesist rhetorics that enable speciesist practices to be culturally active.

On one hand “humane slaughter” advocacy has moved “down”, in terms of Animal Advocacy ideals, to some of the “stricter” Animal Welfare organizations, like the CIWF with for example their recent campaign “Better-Chicken.org”: it seems that such welfarist pro “humane meat” campaigns throw the baby out of with the bathwater, since instead of trying to seek alleviating suffering from the fundamental injustice of speciesism, i.e. the goal of ending speciesism overall as a target, they are of course prolonging speciesist culture.

However, AR advocates who do distance themselves from such campaigns, seem to fail to address (analytically and strategically) how important it is to target the functionality of speciesism and its rhetorics in the plain culturally-based sense:

- AR places its critique more at the sociological and the psychological level, not as much on the anthropological and cultural level, and when it does it does it at least not with a clearly distanced view.
- A question would be e.g.: how is the argument “I only buy organic humanely slaughtered meat” faced by the mainstream AR-scene? Why is this norm within society, which occurs even on culturally / anthropologically critical perspectives, tolerated in terms of rhetorics within the AR community? The only argument to confront such a statement is positivistic asking for veganism and asking people to stop ‘killing animals for food’, yet such statements are not met on a profoundly critical level towards the oppressive functionalities and causes of speciesism in society.

This type of statement has to be contextualized with how a culture works and how the individual takes a role within this cultural setting for instance.

A nonhuman-inclusive vegan economy? Where to start.

Human society annexes every ‘natural’ space, primarily through societal economic processes.

‘Nonhuman Animal Rights’ thus will have to cover all spaces on the globe – within human communities and within the natural environment overall.

In regards to creating a ‘nonhuman-inclusive vegan economy’:

1. First of all we should address the history of ‘rule and possession’.

a.) Different economic models have been historically existent. Which components came into play for forming current economical models (i.e. the capitalist economies and socialist inspired economies) in pure economic terms, politically, socially ... ?

b.) Which forms of political rule went along with ‘ownership’ and ‘dominion’ (annexation of ‘nature’) as economic factors? And what created the basis of legitimization in rule, such as in: monarchies, democracies, tyrannies, as grounded for example on: religion, ideology, philosophy?

c.) How did forms of ‘rule’ and ‘authority’ interact with exploitative contractualist agendas such as imperialism, colonialism, nationalism?

An aspect to highlight: Legitimization falters or ends where the ‘entitlement’ for ‘rule and possession’ excludes and comes into conflict with interests / rights of other human beings, other animals and the ‘natural’ realm / ‘nature’.

2. Secondly we should see how ‘economy’, as a societal material construct, and ‘nature’, as an borderless/undefined space, conflict.

a.) What stands at the center of the conflict between our human-centered economic matrices (as systems of ‘rule and possession’) versus ‘natural’ and autonomous life? What are core reasons for conflict? (The reasons might stand alongside the questions of legitimization.)

b.) Society’s inability for groundbreaking political change, and the inability for change on the private scale (in the individual’s life in society) as being part of

society, extends the “need”/desire for the legitimization of ‘dominion’/’rule’, exploitation and destruction – it otherwise leads to destructive form of a rebellion of collective egotisms probably (...).

What can be alternative forms of economic societal organization?

3. How does nonhuman-inclusiveness and veganism – as entailing some of the key aspects needed to form a pacifist eco-consciousness – offer *ways out of economic systems* that utilize ‘nature’, nonhumans and “powerless” humans, in different degrees, as resources or as in the case of humans, as partly involuntary collaborators?

a.) Discuss the need for veganism to become aware of its own politicalness, in problem-solving and problem-creating terms.

b.) The core of veganism, taken as a social revolutionary ‘movement’, mainly differs from other liberation movements because of its primary focus on nonhuman animal exploitation and nonhuman animal murder / zoocide

Economic ethics or non-ethics:

Where does profiteering from (or/and voluntary collaboration with) ecocide and zoocide mainly begin?

How are humans affected today by the consequences of economically driven ecocide and zoocide, ethically?

How do you think should nonhuman-animal-allies and ethical vegans work against ecocide and zoocide, despite the “vegan revolution’s” minority constellation within society?



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Biologism equals speciesism

In our nonhuman-inclusive approach the definition of *biologism* would be, e.g.
> *the interpretation of animal life from a strictly biological point of view; the use of biological explanations in the analysis of social situations – in general.*
Social in our definition implies nonhuman animality.



Female-identified human individuals and speciesism, species-derogation, -negation -annihilation or the overlooked problem of “women” and anthropocentric-collectivist speciesism

A.) I set forth following *anchor points*, before I start on the topic:

- We can ask if the interpretations of the characteristics, that are considered to make up the marking dividers within a human-animal hierarchy, are in

reality a negation of the autonomous value of otherness [and diverseness] in nonhuman animals.

- We know that the single criterion [against which we measure anything nonhuman animals do] that serves as our standard, is the human parameter, i.e. the human model counts as the ideal, as the standard, for creating norms. So what happens if we put this standard of measurement into doubt?
- Biology has already determined what the identity of nonhuman animals is, and even the Animal Rights movement has satisfied itself with placing the moral question somewhere out of reach by accepting the explanation of the identity of animals as something strictly biological.
-

(Full text: *Moving beyond the horizon of humancentrism: What is an animal and what is a human?* <http://www.simorgh.de/objects/what-is-an-animal/> , accessed 04.12.2018)

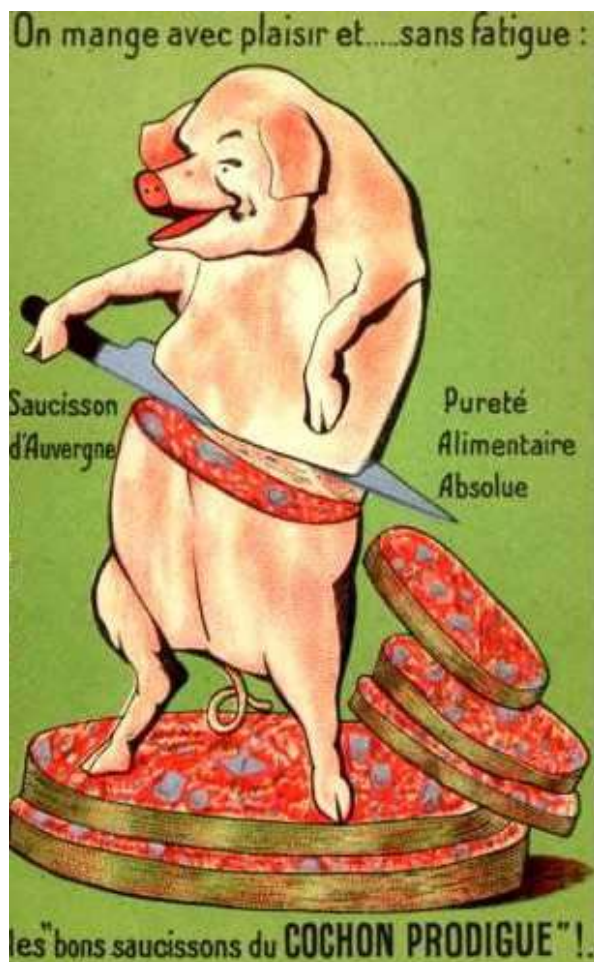


Image source: unknown.

The image is severely speciesist. I find there some discrepancies why some feminists make that comparison between the “treatment” or I guess rather the objectification of women in advertisement etc. with “*meat*”? There is obviously a perverted aesthetical connection thought by speciesist rhetorics, but it leads us into a direction which should be further looked at and not just taken by the superficial “meaning” of such iconography.

My thesis is that “meat” is a solely speciesist problem, unless we would speak of necrophilia and cannibalism.

B.) Feminism and Animal Rights, the one way or the other

“Meat” is not porn and it’s not “sexist” per se, it is porn insofar and forms of zoophilia are involved, direct or indirect, and sexist where sexism is directly applied to the nonhuman animal individuals or groups *themselves*. Speaking of porn and sexism here as a proxy covers up how nonhumans are affected directly. “Meat” is flesh, and it’s the result of a human/humans killing a nonhuman animal/animals.

We should be careful when attaching own sociological issues to Animal Rights in analogy so close to the subject of comparison, that the story lapses and gets one-sided and a important perspectives get neglected instantaneously. All Animal Rights issues need their own valid terminologies and frames of reference, otherwise we risk to blur the lines of differentiation. The analogy of sexism and speciesism fails when applied superficially and in an undifferentiated way because:

Two main points why Animal Rights issues can’t be tied to a strict feminist viewpoint, as long as feminism is used as excusing women from the ethical responsibilities in society towards their nonhuman environment.

- It’s problematic to presuppose that speciesism is something that is more prevalent in male-identified human individuals compared to female-identified human individuals.
- Also, male nonhuman animals are inasmuch sexually abused, e.g. in the farm industry (their reproductive system) such as female nonhuman animals are.

- The sociological dynamics of gender in their effect on speciesist attitudes and actions should be addressed of course, but there is no reason inherent to “biological” gender (if we would go that path) that would prove that “men” are categorically more speciesist than “women”. Also the way in which roleplay is happening in systems of oppression should be addressed, i.e. “women” taking the role of cooks, or preparing the speciesist meals, of wearing feathers and fur, etc. male roles, roles that are swapped ...

C.) Close analogies ... also of genocides and speciecides and their deficits

These types of close analogies in the field of -isms and abuse work in a valid way when we look at the psychology of the perpetrator who seeks to create a victim: the aspect of exerted violence shares many similarities, whereas however on the side of the victimized we have to see the contexts: political, enviro-political, historical, sociological, ... a group or an individual gets picked as a victim for reasons, and those exact reasons need to be analyzed under own terms, and not be conflated. In terms of speciesism, we face many forms of speciesism (i.e. religious, scientific, legal, philosophical, etc.).

D.) Feminism, Speciesism, Anthropocentrism

Random examples of female rhetorics of speciesism:

- objectification of beings oppressed, animalesque figures made with wool / felt;
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160323101532/https://www.stephaniemetz.com/portfolioOverbredAnimals.html> , accessed 04.12.2018.
- helplessness and helping as an act of public viewing,
<http://kathyhigh.com/project-embracing-animal.html> , accessed 04.12.2018.
- the daily randomness of the gender / nonhuman animal speciesist contexts, women taking/being part, <http://huzzahvintage.blogspot.com/2010/10/you-decide.html> , accessed 04.12.2018.
- female-identified fans, adherents, students of Hermann Nitsch for example
- female speciesist artists in general, random examples with critical comments: <http://www.farangis.de/blog/speciesism-sells-for-a-reason> ,
<http://www.farangis.de/blog/against-the-dignity-of-life> ,
<http://www.farangis.de/blog/pesi-girschs-nature-morte> ,
<http://www.farangis.de/blog/biologistic-arts-links> ,

<http://www.farangis.de/blog/reduced-to-specimen>, , all accessed 04.12.2018.

Is a self-critical view on gender / being a woman / feminism necessary?

What would speak against it? We know that in our daily lives we, as “women”, make decisions that touch on core grounds that turn the private/the personal into the political (<https://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/pisp.html> , accessed 04.12.2018.). As antispeciesists we know with our vegan praxis just how impactful our personal choices are, and as social beings we also know how hard it can be for us to draw a line between the social expectations that one tries to fit in (in order to find a job, to be liked or accepted, to keep ones social ties or family structures/felt obligations together, and so forth) and our political ideals and ethical pressing necessities, when both might stand in conflict with each other in times of societal change. Our human social environment might be heavily speciesist and we have to get along with it, somehow yet still inspire change, for instance.

Speciesism, as remote as it seems, is to be found at the same point where *my-choice-to-decide-otherwise-or-not* crosses just any implications of socialization that I feel are ethically unjustifiable. When I rant against sexism I might as well rant against an injustice that targets nonhumans, if I am a vegan anti-speciesist minded person.

Speciesism can be understood to work socially as an ideology, where people who are convinced of their degrading stance, believe in a collectively held fiction that is assumed and agreed upon as “objectivity”, so that no rebuttal can take place on “rational grounds”.

Women do feel at home in this construct inasmuch as men do, on the large scale. Both 50 percent of humanity, male and female, believe so much in human superiority that they are willing to constitute part of a speciesist society by fulfilling their individual part in the fiction.

“Gender” defines itself from interaction within a group or society. Being oppressed as a woman doesn’t automatically mean that you can’t be oppressive towards nonhuman animals. *Drawing an analogy between sexism (or genderism)*

and speciesism does not take account of the different reasons and histories why the victim gets oppressed in the first place – for what ends, and how exactly. If we turn a blind eye on the gender specific functions of speciesism and anthropocentrism we might risk a loophole in our argumentation for our own rights defending nonhumans, and for integral Animal Rights themselves.

Speciesism is a unique tragedy. The history of being classified as “animals” by humans, with all that entailed, as beings whose existence had been on earth eons before “humans” evolved, can’t be compared to any other form of oppression by a strict analogy. Being objectified as solely “animate”, being slaughterable, edible, huntable, vivisectable, being objectifiable and judged as “definable” in the first place constitutes a specific situation for the affected subject, and hints at a unique technique of injustice taking place here on behalf of the oppressive side that is being applied to this particular victimized group.

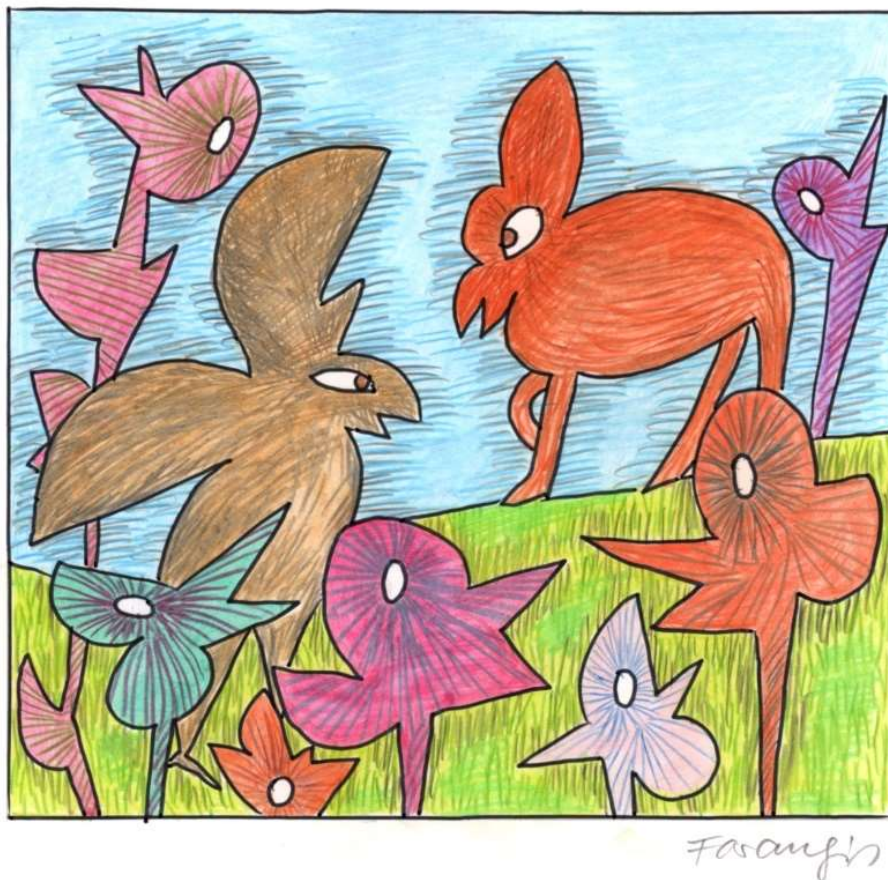
Comparisons between different forms of oppression can be extensively helpless efforts when oppressor and oppressed are as entangled as in the case of speciesist human oppressive settings.

We could straightforwardly name that *natural sciences, religion, philosophy, mass society* have to end classifying the beings we call “nonhuman animals”, or we stay stuck in our psychological accompliceship with the very hierarchical and oppressive systems that we criticize so vehemently as what regards our own pains. I don’t see an alternative as of yet.



The ecofeminist and feminist discourse in Animal Rights and Animal Liberation (Karen Davis, Marti Kheel, Lori Gruen, Carol J. Adams, Kim Socha, Vasile Stanescu and so forth) is pluralistic enough to lead and continue their differentiated discourse I believe, and I thank them for doing so.

Farangis G. Yegane. Painting: Torsi, Drawing: Werkzyklus Krone der Schöpfung, <http://crownofthecreation.farangis.de/>



Nonhuman-inclusive

The term 'veganism' describes the ethical and practical exclusion of any animal- and animal derived product or animal-involving procedures/exploitation utilized to serve human interests. It does not say or indicate yet how nonhuman animals should be implied actively into any framework that implies humans/human societies, as a solution to the existent predominant catastrophic human-animal relation. How nonhumans can and should be included and reached out for, be addressed, implied constructively in a way that confronts the 'animal question' with due justice, in other words: the state of positively dwelling together is not so much and only indirectly put forward. [1]

Similarly the term ‘speciesism’ describes the condition of ethical exclusion, now on a basically sociological level. It describes foremostly the biological categorization yet inasmuch also other forms of categorization – such as religion, philosophical, scientific, etc. – of arbitrary derogative barriers set up by humans/’human cultures and civilization’ towards nonhuman animals.

We thought now to express the direct inclusionary level by a simple term which can be used practically and applied as a scheme to test any settings, condition ... to check any given situative constellation for its *nonhuman-inclusiveness*.

This is about expressing an idea:

- For checking anything for its nonhuman-inclusiveness you logically have to open up perspectives of how your view of nonhumans can be reasonable and ethically complete, appreciative and open-minded.
- You can thus explicitly create, observe, discuss, design, conceptualize each and every aspect of human life in a nonhuman-inclusive approach.

Sounds perhaps too practical and maybe this seems to short a description of our idea, but we find it a helpful angle in our activities.

It should be added that our nonhuman-inclusive approach can be extended into a nonhuman-considerate direction where a seeming absence of nonhumans can be affirmative of nonhuman interests also indirectly, by a decided avoidance of promoting human concepts which openly or subtly suppress nonhumanity and nonhuman animals (...).

[1] This becomes clear e.g. in veganic projects, which 100 percently represent the vegan idea, yet exclude the question of animal life in a proactive form. Veganic projects don’t imply space for nonhuman animals to be involved in a just yet existentially directly present way.

If you keep relegating animality into reductive frameworks while doing animal advocacy work, your activism isn't really aware of the scopes of ethical, political, sociological interfaces between nature-animality-humanity ...

Specifics of speciesism: Aesthetics

A nonhuman-inclusive critique of the view on aesthetics and speciesism on the current Animal Rights and Animal Liberation movements (fragment)

The Animal Rights discussion ends here:

The missing discussion of specifics of nonhuman oppression, in its exact manifestations as humiliation, degradation, negation, violence is currently a hinderance of further development in the political efficacy of the “Animal Rights movement”.

The discussion is omitted in sectors that deal with interrelated oppressive systems > how is it to be specifically “food” e.g.

- in Animal Liberation, which takes biologism uncriticized (as if not posing a problem with nonhumans, only for humans, i.e. “it’s not okay to be apply biologisms to humans, but it’s a tolerable standards when applied to nonhumans”) > the entire layer of theories are not “liberated”
- in the Human-Animal-Studies sector which so far seems to a.) separate between the quality of human versus nonhuman oppression and b.) does not contextualize with environmental ethics due to a separative focus on

nonhuman animals and humans > academic adherence creates sometimes insufficient epistemologies

Contextualizing animality within the widest possible fields seems to be necessary, in order to create an adequacy in perspective on sociological, ecological, philosophical e.g. parameters and qualifiers of the nonhuman situation as faced with speciesist oppression.

Specifics of oppression in speciesism: I am taking aesthetics first, as this is the most overlooked field of problem within the Animal Rights movement considering the powerfulness aesthetics hold in human societies and the specifics of speciesism and aesthetics as an oppressive tool.

Aesthetics in arts is one way in which animal degradation takes form. In which ways does this occur?

- The exact ‘specialty’ of speciesist and/or nonhuman derogative aesthetics can be observed.

What makes up aesthetics in its cultural function overall. The central roles have to be considered which wilfulness (Willkür), taste/preference (Geschmack, Präferenz), mode (Machart), subjectiveness, play.

Nonhuman-inclusiveness

“Thinking experiences” (Denkerfahrungen) of nonhumanity must be taken into account > multiplication with the perspectives of nonhuman friends on the basis of e.g. the shared fact of individual existence and individuality (singular experience fact) – letting difference be and don’t require sameness (this is my postulation), yet locate “life” in “one world” (...).

If we exclude nonhumanness again from all possibilities of angles of narration and narrative, we keep on repeating and perpetuating the initial species-denouncing act.



Specifics of speciesism: History, how we see “the past” and how we preserve “what is important”

Our collectively built historical consciousness, the legacies nonhuman-ignorant-communities and -collectives value:

We relegate nonhuman animal history and nonhuman history in general into the natural-historic chapter of (basically) human history.

We ignore nonhuman narratives; we ignore positions outside the anthropocentric dogma when they come from nonhuman perspectives, we haven't developed any comprehension for nonhumanity on non-speciesist levels.

If we chose a nonhuman-inclusive mode of perception and developed accesses to nonhuman notions of 'being-in-time and socio-cultural-contexts' in their terms (...), we'd be able to phrase nonhuman perspectivity in our words, without

referring to biology or other reductive explanatory segments into which animality has continuously been relegated.

Collective memories

Museums, when they are about culture, thought, introspection, mental “wealth”, aesthetics: nonhumans are at best a means-to-an-end within these contexts, they are never represented as standing for their own complexity in broader nonhuman-inclusive historical contexts.

History in itself is seen as a concept and experienced-phenomenon only conceivable by humans, and amongst humans themselves history is being selectively purported.

Memories of nonhumanity, from their and from nonhuman inclusive perspectivities, are being nullified, consciously conceived as irrelevant and mentally archived within any of the manifold speciesist categories of human- or rather humanitycentered perceptions.



Specifics of speciesism: Physis and visible presence

- The differing, specific physicalness of a nonhuman animal is the criterion upon which humans base their argumentation of proof: that a nonhuman animal cannot physically reason to a more complex content than the limit and quality of capacity that humans ascribe to them.
- The biological markers become an absolute-instance-of-ability in context with quality of existence and existential meaning.
- The state of being a nonhuman animal in itself becomes thus supposedly fully explicable, the constructed explicability is so far never taken out of the human-defined context, not even by their defenders.
- Only in mythological and ancient human folklore we find traces of different ascriptions to nonhuman animal physicality (partly also in children's literature and modern folklore, but to a more humancentric extent).
- The big religious belief systems built their image of the human and god on an equal plane and set that as a standard criterion for leading a qualified reasonable life separate from the state of nature; nonhumans had been even in ancient philosophies seen as the same as 'brute nature' – based on their physical difference and uniqueness/specialness.
- Even today the comparison between "humanness" and "animalness" is being sought in favor of humans as the quality marker for reason and ethics, ethics, morals, reasoning, love, relations, socialness, etc. it is not fundamentally sought in different nonhuman cultures – most prominently language and philosophy are seen as bound to the physis of the human, not the nonhuman, whereas wisdom is sought in "nature" to a huge but yet unclear and unexplained extent in humanity.
- The natural sciences were "the tool of choice" when "humanity" dealt with the "knowledge" of bodies of animality *to draw separations*, thus Galen and later Descartes famously vivisected while basing their thought and observations on a mixture between religion and 'natural sciences' ... Natural sciences only emboldened that certain physics are bound to certain existential qualities, *which the human will define and 'prove'*.
- A separationist culture is being created in human social life, where humanity and animality and nonhuman life is finely segregated, basically

and basically philosophically, so that people don't even think and see anymore, but solely follow the total norm.

- Sadism, violence to the physis of nonhumanity is the warning shot, the societal execution, the harshest separator that keeps humanity an wanted and unwanted enemy to animality (as operating with fear i.e. 'speciesist totalitarian structures').

Seeing big birds



Big bird cartoon by Ken Eaton

The family of the big walking birds, like the Moas (extinct), Nandus, Emus, Ostriches, Elephant Birds (*Aepyornis maximus*, extinct). They tend to be seen

only in regards to their being different than the “typical” flying birds, and their size is often highlighted as if they had something absurd about them.



Table I.

We attribute certain animals to certain stances that we have towards them; each species, each subspecies, has a certain box that a “human cultural context” holds ready for them.

We lack the ethical barrier, the healthy taboo, to understand that nonhumans are not to be threatened, ridiculed, hated, and relegated into irrelevancy, if we want to have a comprehensive ethical outlook on the world; the kind of taboos we have learned and are constantly in a process of learning when we face each other.



Stiftung
Preussischer Kulturbesitz

Pailmann, Hundsköpfige, Kopflöse, Einäugige, Fußschattner (Herodot), Ident. Nr.: VIII A
1607
© Foto: Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



Table II.

Seeing nonhuman animals of today, we tend to relate them to their ancestors in a fascinated yet freak-show-like way: we look how they compare in sizes, who ate who, and why these ancestors wouldn't "survive" or evolved, we say they look or looked "weird" or awesome.



Table III.

In past cultures and civilizations nonhumans were perceived with myth. Now, even extinct and ancient animals that we have never seen in real life, are placed by us into this taboo-free-zone, where we view the past in ways that reinforce our current objectifying speciesist attitudes.

Images:

Table I.: “Bones from the moa – a large, flightless and extinct New Zealand bird – were collected from the early 19th century. Public servant and naturalist Walter Mantell was an important collector of moa bones. He sent large collections to Richard Owen of the British Museum, who was the first scientist to identify moa species. Here, Mantell is fancifully depicted perched on a partly skeletal moa. The document under his arm refers to his government work setting aside land reserves for Māori.”

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/artwork/37312/walter-mantell-riding-a-moa>,
accessed 20.03.2014.

Table II.: Hundsköpfige, Kopfloße, Einäugige, Fußschattner (Herodot), Ident.Nr. VIII A 1607. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum. <http://www.smb->

digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=617600 , accessed 20.03.2014.

Table III.: “A rock painting that appears to be of a bird that went extinct about 40,000 years ago has been discovered in northern Australia. If confirmed, this would be the oldest rock art anywhere in the world, pre-dating the famous Chauvet cave in southern France by some 7,000 years.”

<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2010/06/bird-rock-art-could-be-worlds-oldest/> , accessed 20.03.2014.

Can I question the exclusion of animal bodies in most concepts of justice?



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[Arts and Texts by Farangis G. Yegane and Gita Yegane Arani.](#)

Yes we can extend our
discussion of > forms
totalitarianism > to imply an
outlook on the ongoing
faunacide and ecocide.

Antispeciesist Animal Sociology

Antispeciesism is not necessarily what speciesism isn't

People who consider themselves to be antispeciesists mostly don't see or don't want to discuss the links between: ecocide, genocide and zoocide / faunacide. The term and notion of a zoocide does not even exist for most in that correlation in their terminology. Many still hold the same assumptions about animality that base on ethical histories and theories within philosophy, religion, natural sciences that are the very cause of speciesism. Loving nonhuman animals at the same time as quoting biologist data for instance and instead of coining own liberated terms, antispeciesism today does not equal consistent antispeciesist thought so far. It helps with the symptoms but harms at the same time, by cementing nonhumans into a slippery slope concept of freedom and dignity.

Rights claimed only go as far as theories about nonhuman animals that are compatible with it. Not breaking with the power of human definition, antispeciesism today misses to acknowledge that nonhuman animals are

oppressed in the first place in their very own qualities of who they are, in their identities independent of humancentric frameworks. The denial of their independence happens parallel to them being bereft of their physical freedom and integrity, parallel to being tortured and murdered and physically, objectified to a human will to cause them the ultimate pain

Nonanthropocentric perceptions

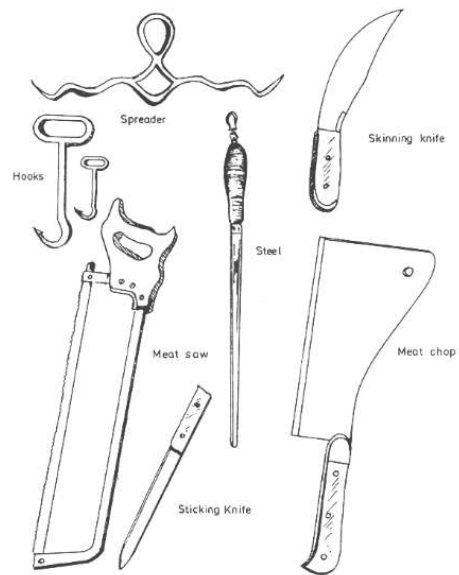
Society acts as if animal degradation and zoocide were irrelevant, they separate these type of phenomena from questions about human existence and environmental ethics. Such blind spots form part of a lacking ability to speak about the fundamentality of the human-animal relation in constructive terms.

The only way humanity's large collectives correlate to nonhumans is by assuming the own existential meaning could be placed on top of nonhumanity in arbitrary hierarchies, assuming that animal existence was of lesser meaningfulness in the universe, in the big scope.

However, animal history, past and present, can't be relegated into these spaces humanity have created ... for killing and torture, or equally into the communication structures of demeaning anthropocentrist propaganda, into any of the institutions of speciesism (ranging from zoological gardens to natural science museums), or into cultural murderous-rape habits of consumption:

Nonhuman cultural history is the life of this universe's animal inhabitants, *and not all human individuals would ever lie about this "crossroads truth" in human perception.*

**Speciesism goes along
with human privilege -
a privilege not to endure
the same injustice
of being completely
objectified**



Being radical antispe ...

A very rough expression of a feeling in regards to radical antispeciesism facing a conflict of being stuck in the middle of biologicistic ‘animal lovers’ and nonhumanity-oblivious social justice clusters ... :

If social justice work categorically excludes animal bodies, it’s questionable to my point of view. Saying this I don’t mean the type of implication that bases on “mild” speciesist, biologicistic views of animality.

I come myself from a ‘mixed race’ background and I have grown up in a country where you would face exclusion if you did not fit into the right image of the virtual “false-ethnicity-person” and the right cliché going along with that. It’s not like all

foreigners or poc or mixed-race individuals were equally accepted or discriminated against. Much was and is dependent on the social function society ascribes you to take, in the place you live.

Seeing a lot of people who come from socially comparable backgrounds such as mine working rightly for social justice, I wonder why the majority misses out on antispeciesist intersectionality though? To my point of view social justice can't just evade questions of how concepts about animality and nature have been constructed in our societies. How can social justice turn an oblivious eye on zoocide and ecocide, when exactly those are facts that result from the very same foundations on which other oppressive systems thrived, and when those facts are taking place are all around us?

I believe that justice for humanity can hardly base on the oppressive constructs of animality and nature anymore, without being prolonged types of injustice.

We speak about the atrocities of the [genocides](#),
and meanwhile we speak about the [ecocide](#),
but when are we going to speak of the [zoocide](#)
that is taking place?

Gruppe Messel / Tierautonomie

what is it in people
that makes

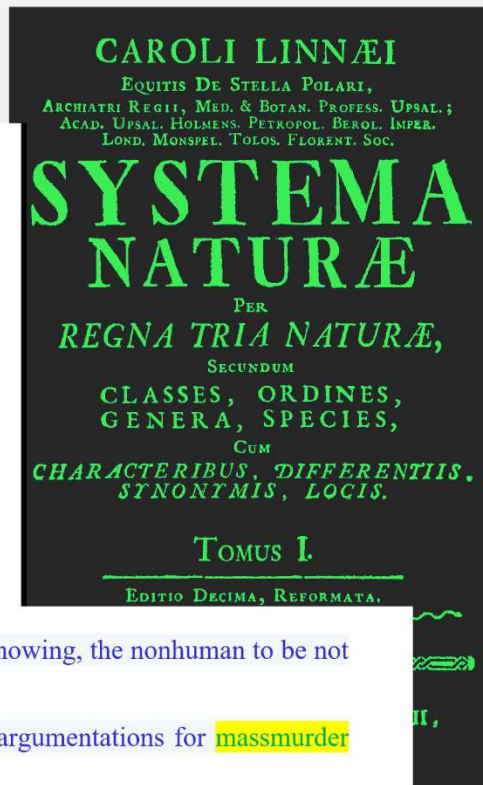
zoocide + ecocide

possible?

The assumption that only the
"homo" is "sapient" (knowing)
– as in the taxonomical classification
of the *Homo sapiens* as the crown of creation
by Carl von Linné / Carolus Linnaeus –
expresses that nonhuman animal knowledge
and the nonhuman living world is considered
to be of lesser or no (relevant) type of knowledge
(from a human perspective).

The human is assumed to be knowing, the nonhuman to be not
knowing.

This type of thought enabled argumentations for massmurder
on the biological basis.



What is it in people that makes zoocide and ecocide
possible?

The assumption that only the “homo” is “sapient” (knowing) – as in the taxonomical classification of the *Homo sapiens* as the crown of creation by Carl von Linné / Carolus Linnaeus – expresses that nonhuman animal knowledge and the nonhuman living world is considered to be of lesser or no (relevant) type of knowledge (from a human perspective). The human is assumed to be knowing,

the nonhuman to be not knowing. This type of thought enabled argumentations for massmurder on the biological basis.

We are



Farangis G. Yegane



Anna Margarte „Anni“ Prenzel geb. Denk



Miriam Yegane Arani



The multicolored dog by Farangis



Badge made by Farangis for an exhibit



From a triptych from Farangis' Erinyes series



From the punk as a search for female autonomy series by Farangis



Azadeh Yegane Arani (cat family part of Yegane Arani's) and daughter of Saline Yegane Arani.



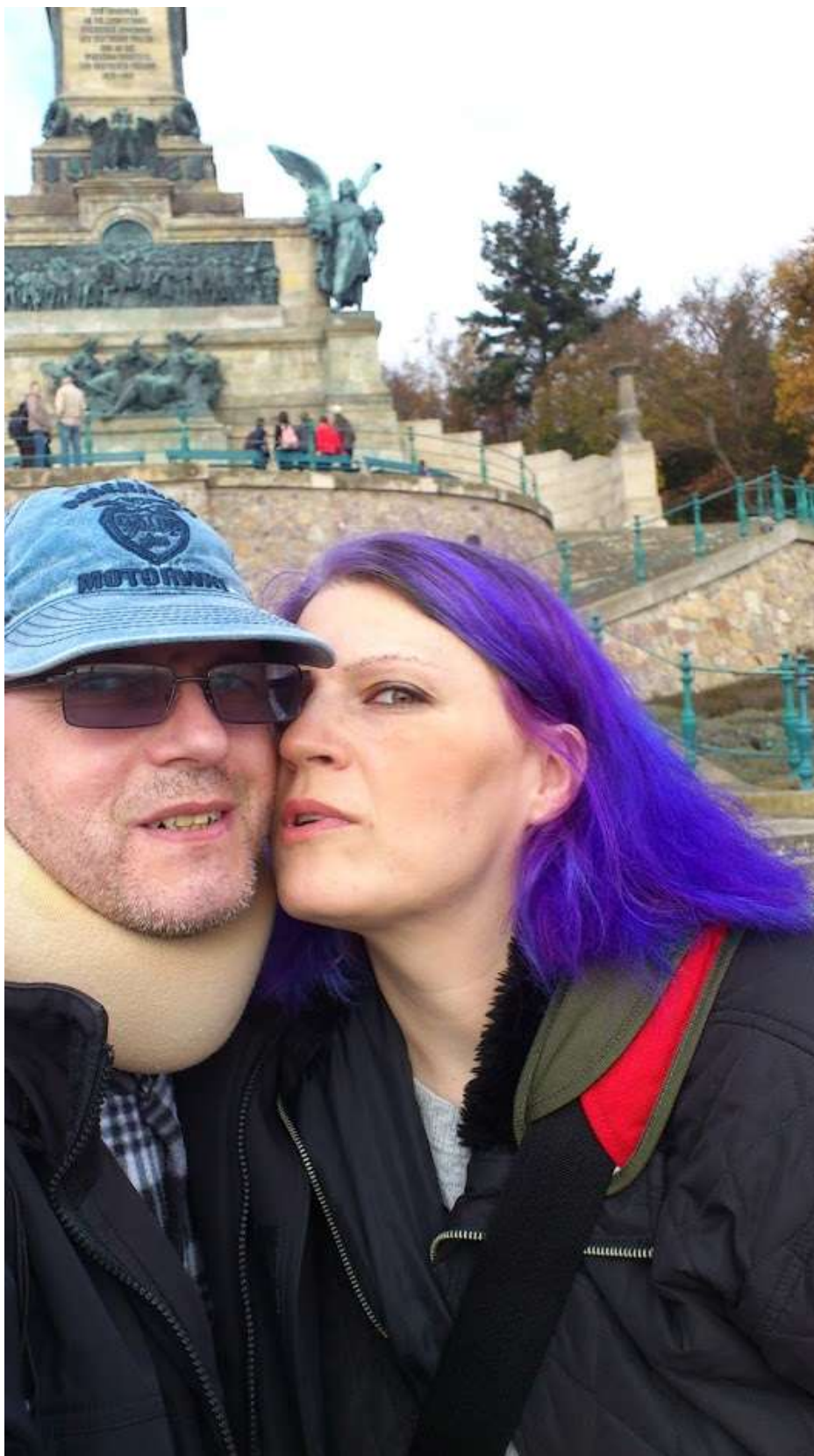
Saline and Mithras Yegane Arani (rabbit part of Yegane Arani family)



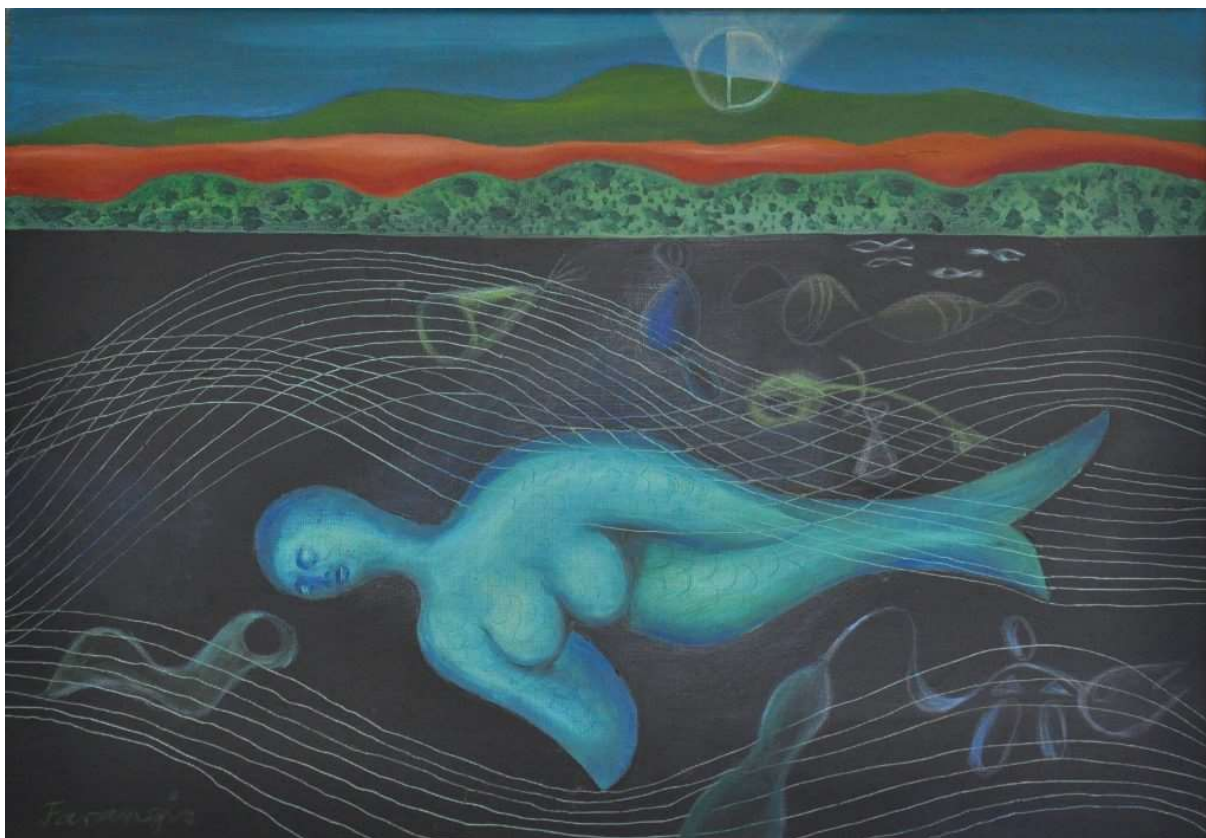
Palang and Bahman Yegane Arani (parakeet part of the Yegane Arani family)



Our former house in the Bundenweg 7, not existent anymore, has been torn down, we write about this in our autoethnographical journal.



Lothar Yegane Arani and Tschördy G.M. Yegane Arani, the editors



Woman and Fish in Sea by Farangis



Miriam Yegane Arani and Mohammad Yegane Arani (Manuchehr Jamali)

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